

CUPID'S PRANKS ON ST. VALENTINE'S DAY.



HER VALENTINE.

IT WAS ST. VALENTINE'S day, and the old Quisenberry farm house was in apple-pie order, from attic to cellar.

The pine-wood floor in the kitchen was white as soap and water could make it; the pots and pans fairly shone from the scrubbing they had received; and the window-panes blinked and blazed like sheets of polished silver.

"I'm glad it's done," sighed Miss Priscilla Quisenberry, rolling down her sleeves, and gazing at her work with an air of satisfaction.

"Let me see," she added. "I've scoured and churned; baked bread and made cake, and fried culis and boiled a ham. I'll have a chance to rest a spell, now, before it's time to get supper."

"Priscilla," called her sister-in-law, in a shrill voice, from the sitting-room. "Priscilla! Come an' see what Bob Jones has fished out."

"What do you reckon 'tis?" she queried, as Priscilla obeyed the summons. "A valentine? It's too big for a letter."

"It—it does look like a valentine," assented Priscilla, turning the square, embossed envelope over and over, with a puzzled air.

"Why don't you open it, an' see what 'tis?" cried her sister-in-law, tartly. "An' an' stan' there, a colorin' up till your cheeks are as red as the tassels on the front window-curtains."

Priscilla had reasons of her own for not opening the valentine in a hurry. She thought she recognized the handwriting on the envelope. It was that which sent the red blood into her cheeks; for she thought—she felt sure—it was Mr. Cheeseboro's handwriting, and oh, how she wished she could slip away to her own room and open the precious treasure by herself.

But that was out of the question, with those sharp eyes staring at her, and with trembling fingers, and her heart beating a tattoo in her bosom, she carefully slit open one end of the envelope, and drew out—a comic valentine. A horrid caricature of an old maid, with peaked nose and chin, high cheek-bones and very, very red hair.

"An' ole maid! Wal, wal," uttered the sister-in-law, Lucinda. "I 'loved' 'would be a nice one, from the looks. Who d'ye reckon sent it, Priscilla?"

"I don't know."

By a great effort, Priscilla kept back the tears of mortification and disappointment that were almost trembling in her eyes.

"Looks some like Felix Cheeseboro's handwrite, don't it?" said Lucinda, peering at the envelope. "Though I don't reckon he'd trouble himself to send you a valentine, pritty or ugly. They say he took Mirandy Springs home from singin'-school, the other night."

Priscilla would have given a diamond-mine, if she had possessed one, only to get away from Lucinda's prying eyes and keen tongue, and from all the other eyes in the world, and have one good cry by herself. But there was the supper to get and chores to do, the comfort of her father and brother Reuben to look after; for Lucinda, Reuben's wife, chose to consider herself an invalid, and shirked her share of the household duties.

But at last, after what seemed like a lifetime to Priscilla, the supper dishes were washed, her father and brother had seen and criticised the valentine; for, of course, Lucinda had given all the particulars of it; at last the old

clock had ticked away the hours till bedtime, and Priscilla was alone.

But indignation had taken the place of grief by this time, and she crept under the home-spun blankets and the blue-and-white coverlet with dry eyes.

"If he does consider me an old maid," she thought, "it was a cruel way of telling me so. Besides, he's older than I am; and if my hair is red, it isn't a fiery red, like that."

Now, Miss Priscilla's hair was not a fiery red by any means. It was a clear chestnut-brown, with only a tinge of sunlit gold shining in its wavy depths.

And, if she was an old maid, as some had said—though twenty-five is not so very old, to be sure—she was a very attractive one, with deep dimples indenting her cheeks and a complexion fresh as a pink-lipped sea-shell.

It was the day after St. Valentine's day and Felix Cheeseboro was holding communion with himself after a fashion he frequently had.

"I don't know," he muttered, as he finished his dinner and rose from the table with a thoughtful frown. "I don't know but what I've had encouragement enough from Priscilla Quisenberry to—ah, that is, I b'lieve she'd have me, if I'd ask her outright."

"She isn't a bit for'ard, like Mirandy Springs; but her eyes drop down kind o' shy like, an' her cheeks get as red as crab apple blows, sometimes when I meet her, all of a sudden. An' she's a mighty good housekeeper, too. That wife o' Reuben's ain't wuth a shuck 'round a house. I could see that, last time we thrashed fur the old man. Priscilla has the heft of it all. She shouldn't work an' dredge so, if she was my wife. She could see to things like, an' tell Aunt Lindy what to do."

"I don't know but I'll call 'round there this evenin'." I can let on I want Reuben, or the old man—'tisn't likely they'll be in yet, from the new clearin'." An' maybe I'll git a chance to talk to Priscilla alone. If I do—hello! what's this, Aunt Lindy?"

"Dunno," tittered Lindy. "S'p'ee it's a valentine. Sam jus' now brung it from de post-offis." And with a show of ivory that a young elephant might have envied, Aunt Lindy retired to her kitchen to make her own comments on the subject.

Mr. Cheeseboro did not bestow much attention on the outside of the envelope, at first—not being a connoisseur in regard to chirography—but opened it at once, with some natural curiosity. Aunt Lindy's supposition proved a correct one. It was a valentine, and a comic one, at that.

"Well, I—"

Mr. Cheeseboro stopped short. His countenance betrayed an unusual degree of astonishment, together with some amusement.

"Somebody has mistook me fur an old maid," he muttered. "Far this here ain't nothin' but an old maid, with red hair, an' a most audacious sharp nose."

"Now, who in thunder was smart enough to send it, I wonder?"

He turned the envelope over and over; but the stiff, crabbed handwriting, evidently disguised, gave no clue to the sender.

"I wonder now," he pondered, thoughtfully, "if 'twasn't Mirandy Springs that sent it? I'll bet a cheese cake it was her."

"Yes, now I come to think of it, she was a-tearin' me, a spell back, about

Priscilla Quisenberry; an' I recollect she called her an old maid.

"Old maid, indeed! Priscilla's the best lookin' girl on Huckleberry Creek, old or young; an' worth a dozen like Mirandy Springs, besides."

"Well, if she thinks it's such a joke to send me a picture of an old maid, I'll just send it back to her, to let her see I know where it come from."

And when Mr. Cheeseboro mounted his sorrel mare, to make the projected call at the Quisenberry farmhouse, the valentine was carefully deposited in his overcoat pocket.

It went no further than the village postoffice, however, where Felix procured a square envelope, inclosed the old maid's "pictur", and posted the missive, addressed to "Miss Mirandy Springs."

It was late in the afternoon, and Priscilla was in the kitchen, getting supper. A snapping fire roared and crackled in the black-bellied cooking stove, on which she placed a skillet of fresh pork, to fry. Taking a handful of dried sage she rubbed it to powder, and sifted it slowly over the meat, which was already beginning to give out a most appetizing odor.

Priscilla's heart was still sore from the shock she had received; but with the pride of her sex, she hid the wound from other eyes, and went about her household duties as usual.

Going to the cellar, she brought a pan of rosy-cheeked apples from the bin, and was paring them for sauce, when slipshod footsteps sounded in the hall, and Lucinda opened the kitchen door and looked in.

Where's your pa, Priscilla?" she asked. "Felix Cheeseboro is in the settin'-room, and wants to see him."

Priscilla looked startled.

"Mr. Cheeseboro? I—I don't know. What does he want?"

"Do you reckon I asked him what he wanted? You needn't to color up so—'tain't you he wants to see. It's your pa, I told you," and Lucinda shuffled away.

"Priscilla hain't no idee where he is, Felix," she reported. "Nor me either. But you must stay to supper. He'll be sure to come in then."

Felix did not think he could stay to supper; but he waited awhile, in hopes of seeing Priscilla. His waiting proved to be in vain, however, and he finally took his departure, promising to call again.

"Reckon Priscilla was too busy to come in," he thought, consolingly, as he rode off on his sorrel mare. "It's too bad she has the whole house to tend to; but she shan't have it to do long, if I can help it," he added, with a look of decision in his gray eyes.

"I wonder if he got the valentine," thought Priscilla, as she finished paring and quartering the apples. "If he did he will see that I know who sent it to me."

On the same afternoon, Mirandy Springs was doing up her frizzes in bits of tin, which she kept for the purpose, being, as she thought, more efficacious than curl-papers.

"I want 'em to friz right nice for to-morrow night," she commented, twisting one of the tins till it nearly brought tears to her eyes. "Maybe Mr. Cheeseboro'll ask me to go the meetin' with him. If he don't, I'll go alone, an' most likely he'll fetch me home, like he did from singin'-school last week."

"I've got ahead o' Priscilla Quisenberry, anyhow," she added, with a look of triumph in her black eyes, "and I'm a-going to keep it. She'll be mad as hops to find I've cut her out."

"Wait till I git to be mistress o' Felix Cheeseboro's big house, though. Won't I show the folks? I'll turn up my nose at them stuck-up Quisenberrys, too."

"An' that sassy Lindy'll hev to step around mighty lively, I kin tell her;

fur I don't 'low to do a lick o' work myself."

"Mirandy," grumbled her mother, from the kitchen. "What on airth are you a doin' there so long? Come along out here an' see what Enoch's brung you from the store. It's in a big square envelop, an' my han's in the dough, so't I kaint open it."

Miranda hurried out to the kitchen, twisting up her last friz as she went.

"It must be a valentine," she cried, snatching up the envelope.

And tearing it open, she jerked out—the old maid, of course.

"Why—why, it's a nasty ole comic one, an' I jest know Priscilla Quisenberry sent it to me, spiteful ole thing. She's a ole maid herself, an' I 'low to tell her so, first chance I git," and Miranda flung the obnoxious valentine into the fire and flounced out of the room in a huff.

"Where's Mirandy?" demanded Enoch, shuffling into the house, after putting up his horse in the stable.

"I dun know," said Mrs. Sprigs, smiling. "She jest bounced off som'ers, mad as a wet hen, about that ore valentine you fished her."

"Was it a ugly one?" grinned Enoch.

"Where's it at?"

"She slung it in the fire, an' burnt it up. Yes, 'twas ugly as git out. She thinks Priscilla Quisenberry sent it."

"Priscilla didn't send it then," declared Enoch, "fur I was a-stannin' back by the stove, in the postoffice, an' I see Felix Cheeseboro put it in the envelop himself. An' then he backed it, an' poked it in the box and rid off."

"An' St. Sturdy took it out o' the box an' sez to me: 'Here's somethin' fur your folks, now,' he sez, an' I put it in my pocket and fished it home."

"Wall that is curus," said Mrs. Sprigs, cutting out her biscuits with a tin yeast-powder box. "I wouldn't hev thought he'd send Mirandy a pictur of an old maid."

"Ole maid?" cried Enoch, staring. "Did it hev red hair an' a long peaked nose?"

"Yes, it did. The reddest hair an' peakidest nose I ever see."

"Wal," cried Enoch, delighted. "It's the very one I sent to Priscilla Quisenberry, sure enough. But it beats me to know how Felix Cheeseboro got a-holt of it. Maybe she give it to him, though, to send to Mirandy," he added.

Miranda's frizzes were as crisp as her heart could desire, and her eyes shone with anticipated triumph as she repaired by herself to the "meeting" on the following night. For she had refused to accept Enoch's version of the valentine and persisted in believing that Priscilla sent it.

But the expected triumph was not realized; for to her vexation Mr. Cheeseboro walked up to Priscilla after services were over and deliberately requested the pleasure of accompanying her home. Which request was granted rather coldly.

"Did you get any valentines, Miss Priscilla?" asked Felix, after some moments of silence.

"One," she returned, shortly.

"Why, that's odd; I got two."

Mr. Cheeseboro was quite elated at such a remarkable coincidence; but Priscilla was not so much surprised as he had expected her to be.

"What sort of a one was yours?" he inquired, confidentially. "Pretty or ugly? Of course 'twas a pretty one, though," he added, venturing a very faint pressure of the hand which rested on his arm.

"Of course it wasn't a pretty one," retorted Priscilla, severely. "It was the one you sent me, Mr. Cheeseboro."

"I? The one I sent you?" stammered Felix, greatly amazed.

For the first time, Priscilla began to doubt whether he really had sent it, after all.

"You don't mean to say you didn't send it?" she queried, anxiously.

"Indeed I did not," returned her escort, earnestly. "I never sent one to anybody, only the one I got, and I sent that back to Mirandy Springs; fur I thought she had sent it to me."

Then the mystery was out, and Priscilla's heart was light as a puff-ball when she parted with Mr. Cheeseboro at her door.

Mrs. Lucinda Quisenberry was sitting by the kitchen fire, limp and slipshod as usual, the next afternoon, when Priscilla came in from milking the cows. She set down a two-gallon bucket, brimming with the foamy fluid, and brought out the shining milk-pans from the pantry.

"Mr. Cheeseboro's in the settin'-room with your pa," volunteered Lucinda, limply knitting away at a yarn sock, as she sat over the fire.

The sea-shell pink in Priscilla's cheeks deepened to a poppy red, as usual, under her sister-in-law's sharp eyes.

"Wal, I declare," snapped the querulous woman, crossly. "Your cheeks are a-gittin' as red as clover-bobs. I don't reckon it's Mr. Cheeseboro's after. I heerd 'em a-talkin' 'bout the red heifer; reckon he wants to trade fur her."

"'Tain't likely a poor girl like you is a-goin' to git sich a fore-handed man as Felix."

"Why, the Cheeseboro farm's wuth a hundred dollars an acre, every foot of it. An' there's forty acres in medder-grass alone."

"The girl that gits the owner o' that farm'll be a lucky one, I tell you."

"An', any way, I reckon you're cut out fur an old maid, Priscilla."

Priscilla strained away the milk in the bright tin pans without deigning a reply to her sister-in-law's tirade.

"Hello," cried Farmer Quisenberry, coming out of the kitchen in his home-spun coat and blue "ducking" overalls. "What d'ye reckon Felix wants, Priscilla?"

Priscilla hesitated, blushing deeper than ever.

"Go 'long in, Priscilla," he said. "I reckon you know what he wants, and you know best whether he kin hev it, or not."

And Priscilla smoothed down her red-brown tresses, and went slyly in, to meet her lover.

While Mrs. Lucinda stared in amazement, and Farmer Quisenberry warmed his hands complacently over the kitchen stove.

"Who'd a' thought," he said, "that a darter o' mine would ever do so well as that? Why, thar ain't a gal 'round here, rich or poor, but what would a' felt sot up to git Felix Cheeseboro. They'd a' snapped at him."

And Mrs. Lucinda stared in greater amazement than ever; for it seemed Priscilla was not cut out for an old maid after all—People's Journal.

"SIZING UP" THE GUESTS.

Why a Hotel Clerk's Desk Always Commands a View of the Entrance.

"Did you ever think why every hotel office faces the entrance?" queried a veteran clerk for the reception of guests, addressing a writer for the Washington News. "Well, it isn't mere accident, I can assure you, but the main idea of the arrangement is to give ample opportunity for the clerk to study the people who come into the house. Every stranger is an understudy, and to make just one mistake in 'sizing' him up might mean serious trouble. There is the man who should not be trusted for a room if he is without a trunk. Then there is another who can stand double rates for the best rooms and is sure to want a bath, whilst another will never wish to bother with such lavatory nonsense as can only be found in a tub. There is the man who wants the cheapest room in the house and is willing to put up with annoyance to get it. Another has a literary genius and will burn gas with an open hand and you want to get him in a room with but one jet. All these peculiarities the clerk is supposed to divine, and in order to do it 'by sight' he wants to get a view of the guest from the time he enters the door till he reaches the counter, for you can tell character by a man's swing or appearance a little way off that could not so well be detected when he is within a foot of you. 'Takes brains to be behind a desk? Well, I just tell you you have it now. It does take brains and not alone a diamond shirt pin, as some unsophisticated people think."

Earnings of Professionals.

In any consideration of the earnings of actors it should be borne in mind that in the amusement profession the personal expenses of its followers bear a larger proportion to their incomes than in any other. The following estimates of the average annual earnings of prominent players are the result of careful inquiry, and are believed to be reasonably accurate: Francis Wilson, \$70,000; De Wolf Hopper, \$65,000; E. S. Willard, \$45,000; Rose Coghlan and her brother Charles, when playing jointly, \$50,000 each; Julia Marlowe, \$47,000; Nat Goodwin, \$30,000; William H. Crane, \$25,000 (he made over a million out of "The Senator"); Stuart Robson, \$30,000; Joseph Jefferson (who never plays more than twenty weeks in a year), \$55,000; the Kendalls, \$35,000; E. H. Sothern, \$30,000; Modjeska, last year, \$25,000; but she has played to \$70,000; Wilson Barrett, last American tour of twenty-five weeks, \$30,000; Rosina Volke, \$30,000; James O'Neill, \$10,000; Robert Downing, \$6,000; Little Corinne, \$30,000; Henry Irving, on his present American engagement, will net \$100,000.

What Theatricals Cost.

A half million dollars a day, or one hundred and fifty-six millions of dollars per annum, is the approximate expenditure of the people of the United States upon theatrical entertainments. There are upward of 1,000 strictly professional companies traveling over the country for forty weeks in every year. Leaving out the people permanently employed at theaters, it is estimated that 15,000 actors and actresses are "on the road" during the season. Counting in managers, staff and local employees, and unemployed "boaters," at least 60,000 persons are engaged, directly or indirectly, in the theatrical business.

Failure of Five-Masted Vessels.

In explanation of the changes to be made in the rigging of the Louis at San Francisco, and possibly that of other vessels of her type, her captain and others interested state that the five-masted schooner is practically useless so far as sailing qualities are concerned. The five-master's sails can not be set to draw well, and under the most favorable circumstances she cannot sail over four knots with the breeze astern. Sea captains claim that the days of the five-masted schooners are numbered.

Very Much in Earnest.

Auntie—Why, what are you doing? Little Johnny—Only prayin'.

"Praying?"

"Yes'm. I'm prayin' that I'll be a good boy this afternoon."

"That's noble."

"Yes'm. Mamma said if I was a good boy this afternoon, she'd bring me some candy."

Now, What Was It?

Auntie—Was that play you saw a tragedy or a comedy? Little Niece—Wat's that mean, auntie?

"Did you cry?"

"No'm."

"Did you laugh?"

"No'm."

"What did you do?"

"Went to sleep."

A New York writer bewails the fact that the poolrooms have opened again for business in Gotham and that over twenty are now running "wide open." Nearly a score have been doing business rather quietly but publicly for several months.

John Lawlor, the ex-champion hand-bill player of Ireland, was married recently in Brooklyn to Miss Alice Brown of Dublin.

While a big herd of cattle, being driven from the ranch to market, was passing through the Snohomish valley, Washington, an immense deer, the largest ever seen in those parts, bounded out of the woods and joined the drove. Partly because of the difficulty of cutting out the animal from the middle of the herd, where it quickly worked its way, and partly through curiosity as to what it would do, the cowboys did not molest it. The deer remained quietly walking with the herd for eight hours, and finally entered into a corral with the cattle at Snohomish, where it was captured.


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Rev. O. H. Power

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Appeared on my lip. Disagreeable eruptions came on my neck. After taking 4 bottles of Hood's Sarsaparilla, all the traces of disease have disappeared and the medicine has given me renewed vigor and strength. I am now almost 73 years of age, and work like a tiger. And I know that Hood's Sarsaparilla has had much to do with my vigor and strength. I recommended it to my wife, who has suffered so much with rheumatic troubles, as also with female weakness. In two years

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she has used about 3 bottles of Hood's Sarsaparilla, and to-day, and for the last 6 months, she seems like a new being." Rev. O. H. Power, 2224 Hanover Street, Chicago, Illinois.

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Moravia, N. Y., Sept. 7, 1893.

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Gave me immediate relief.

I heated the Anointment in with a flat-iron. In four days the pains had all disappeared. I think Swamp-Root one of the greatest medicines ever offered to suffering humanity. Any one wishing to write me may do so and I will gladly answer.

Yours truly, Frank B. Reynolds.

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